

The Random Jottings of Donald Jay from Nelson Lancashire.

Home of the Devil

Home of the Devil Cockerham -River Cocker and surrounding area Legend of Old Nick

The Devil once decided that his new home would be here, but a cunning schoolteacher managed to drive him away after convincing Old Nick that he should try to make a rope of sand which could be used in the river without dissolving.

Title: The Home of the Devil

In the heart of Cockerham, nestled along the winding curves of River Cocker, there stood a place of eerie repute - the Home of the Devil. This legend, shrouded in mystery, whispered through generations of locals. It was said that the Devil himself once claimed this land as his own.

The story began in a time lost to history, when the world still danced to the rhythms of ancient folklore. Old Nick, as they called him, grew tired of his infernal abode and sought a new residence. Drawn by the serenity of Cockerham, he decided to make this tranquil corner of the world his new home.

Word of the Devil's arrival spread like wildfire, sending ripples of fear through the close-knit community. Villagers exchanged wary glances, clutching crosses and reciting prayers, seeking protection from the impending darkness.

However, in a small cottage on the outskirts of Cockerham, there resided a schoolteacher with a reputation for sharp wit and cunning intellect. Miss Abigail Blackwood was her name, and she was known for her unyielding resolve and a clever tongue that could outsmart even the most cunning of adversaries.

Learning of the Devil's intentions, Miss Blackwood knew she had to act swiftly. She concocted a plan, borne of equal parts bravery and cleverness. She set out to confront Old Nick, her heart pounding with a mix of dread and determination.

One moonless night, beneath the ancient willow trees that lined the riverbank, Miss Blackwood found herself face to face with the Devil. His eyes gleamed with the malevolent fire that danced within him.

Undeterred, she greeted him with a polite curtsy. "Good evening, sir. I must say, your choice of residence is quite... unexpected."

The Devil grinned, revealing teeth as sharp as shards of obsidian. "I grow weary of the infernal flames. I seek solace in the quiet waters and rustling leaves of Cockerham."

Miss Blackwood nodded, feigning admiration. "A fine choice, indeed. But may I offer a suggestion, sir? It is said that the true test of a residence's worth is its resilience. Perhaps you could attempt to fashion a rope of sand that won't dissolve in the river's flow?"

The Devil's brows furrowed in intrigue. He had never encountered such an audacious proposition. "A rope of sand, you say?"

"Yes," she replied, her voice steady. "A rope that can withstand the river's embrace. If you can accomplish such a feat, the people of Cockerham will welcome you with open arms."

The Devil, never one to back down from a challenge, agreed to the task. Night after night, he toiled at the water's edge, shaping the finest grains of sand into a delicate, yet resilient rope. Weeks turned to months, and the villagers watched in astonishment as the Devil labored on. His determination was unwavering, his skill unmatched. He poured his infernal energy into this impossible task.

Then, one fateful night, as the moon hung low in the sky, the Devil stood triumphant, holding in his hands a rope of sand, strong enough to defy the river's current.

Miss Blackwood, standing nearby, couldn't help but offer a genuine smile. "You have proven yourself, sir. The people of Cockerham shall welcome you with open arms."

And so, the Devil, having earned the respect of both river and town, made Cockerham his home, turning it from a place of fear into one of unlikely camaraderie. Legends passed down through the ages would tell of the cunning schoolteacher who outsmarted the Devil and, in doing so, forged an unexpected alliance between man and infernal being.

By Donald Jay.